

May 25, 2007

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Portals II, Room TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Reply Comments
Inquiry Concerning the Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capability
GN Docket No. 07-45

Dear Ms. Dortch:

I am writing to submit these reply comments in support of the Comments of the American Library Association (ALA) in this proceeding. I am Paul Sanchez, Technology Librarian for the San Bernardino Public Library.

The ALA raised some important issues in its comments in this proceeding. I am writing to augment some of those concerns. First, we support the ALA's request that the Commission explore the impact of broadband technologies on public libraries. As the ALA noted, about 98% of public libraries provide some form of Internet access. In our city, the main library and its 3 branches offer computers to patrons with Internet capability. It is our mission to provide free access to the world of ideas, information and creative experience for all citizens of San Bernardino.

This Internet connectivity provided by our public libraries is increasingly important. We find that our public libraries are used by a variety of students, the elderly, government workers, and low income people to name a few. In addition, some of the most popular uses of our computers are email, employment searching, unemployment filings, legal information, government services, educational research, networking and word processing.

The ALA also noted, however, that only 45% of public libraries nationwide are satisfied with their level of broadband connectivity. We are concerned that the current marketplace is not working adequately to meet the needs of our public libraries. In our area the primary providers of Internet services are Verizon California, and AT&T. These two companies appear to have a monopoly of sort that only enables a public library to select one or the other. With neither providing adequate services nor economic cost consistent with our low-income population. It is not uncommon to come to the conclusion that the complexity of finding an adequate broadband type provider for connectivity is often beyond the expertise of our library staff.

As a result of these difficulties, we are not able to meet the needs of our patrons as we would like and as they expect. For instance, huge downloads, videos, graphics and a shortage of terminals add to our problems. Typical patrons do not have the knowledge to use a computer much less set up an email account. While we offer free computer classes,

patrons need one on one training, which we don't have the staff or resources to do. When you add to the fact that our phone line suffers down time, interruption, or low bandwidth, our patrons easily become frustrated with providers and our staff.

For these reasons, we support ALA's suggestion that the FCC should encourage the public providers of broadband connectivity to work more closely with public libraries. Our public libraries need more bandwidth, preferably at lower rates than the general "market-based rates" that are currently being offered to us. But most important, we would like to find a way for the broadband providers in our state to work with us to find solutions to our broadband issues. An incentive program or discount for city entities or organizations located in low-income areas would be a nice step in the right direction.

Given the important role that public libraries play in our society and economy, we encourage the FCC to increase its focus on the need to provide public libraries with enhanced broadband connectivity in this proceeding.

Sincerely,